

Elder's Digest

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Elder's Digest is a quarterly periodical of Brazil Publishing House, a publishing house of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brazil. It is intended to be a tool that assists in the ministry of elders and local church leaders.

Background

The General Conference, the highest level of management in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has attempted to follow the prophetic orientation conveyed by Ellen G. White of which “the living preacher and the silent messenger [the publications] are both necessary to the conclusion of the great work that is before us.”¹

Founding

In this spirit, the General Conference formulated a “mission statement” for a publication aimed at the elders of a local church in the United States and English-speaking countries, explaining why a new magazine named *Elder's Digest*, began to circulate quarterly. The mission statement, published in the first issue, stated that the goal of *Elder's Digest* is to meet the spiritual, mental, physical, and social needs of church elders; revise the major doctrinal themes of the Bible; help train and support them as they seek to fulfill the gospel commission to nurture their members and to evangelize their community.²

The first issue of this magazine was released in January 1994 under the coordination of the General Conference Ministerial Association. James H. Zachary, one of the associate secretaries of the Ministerial Association, was commissioned as editor of the magazine and led it for two editions when he was replaced by Joel Sarli in 1994. In turn, Sarli was replaced by Jonas Arrais during the General Conference Assembly in 2005.³

History

In Brazil, *Elder's Digest* was named *Revista do Ancião* and included two phases: the Central Brazil Union Conference (July 1997 to December 2000) and the South American Division (from January 2001).

In the first phase, the director of *Elder's Digest*, Mário Valente, was its editor and president of the Central Brazil Union Conference, as well as the ministerial secretary of his respective Union. The magazine started with ten

thousand copies and reached fifteen thousand. Its editorial content, graphic style, number of pages, and quarterly regularity of editions replicated the American model.

Soon after the release of *Elder's Digest* by the Central Brazil Union Conference, two other Brazilian Unions (South and Southeast) joined the project and started to receive the Central Union magazine and distribute it in their territory. The Ministerial Association of the South American Division approved the initiative of these Unions and, in order to serve their territory in South America, took over the publishing of the magazine. Thus, in early 2001, the Division invited Brazil Publishing House to prepare *Elder's Digest*.

Perspective

As a church support publication in the South American Division, *Elder's Digest* has published articles that aim to assist the elder in his role as an agent of church unity. Empowering elders to fulfill their role as spiritual leaders has been the primary purpose of the *Elder's Digest* since its inception. Another purpose of this periodical has been to show the local leader how to work in harmony with the administrative procedures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Elder's Digest, under the supervision of the South American Division, has devoted most of its articles to the empowerment of elders, the unity of administrative procedures, and themes that help to establish the theological unity of the Church.

The contents of *Elder's Digest* are distributed over 36 pages and in the final format of 20.6 x 27 cm. With different margins and columns, there is a dynamic text box that provides a pleasant journey through editorial content. For a more attractive and engaging look, the magazine is printed in polychrome (four colors). This enhances and enables the use of graphics, illustrations, and photos that accompany the published articles and contribute to an enhanced interpretation thereof.

For statistical purposes, *Elder's Digest* has recorded on the file page of each issue the number of copies of that edition, that is, the print run. In 2001, in the first edition, the print run exceeded twenty-two thousand copies. In 2010, in the last edition, the print run was thirty-eight thousand five hundred copies, a 75 percent growth over the decade. By the end of 2017, the magazine had a print run of forty-nine thousand copies.

The editorial line of *Revista do Ancião* is the same as that of the American periodical *Elder's Digest* and was outlined in the first edition editorial of *Elder's Digest* written by James Cress, who was then responsible for the General Conference Ministerial Association of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In his editorial, Cress suggested that the magazine should present resources and working methodologies already tried in other churches; provide practical suggestions that can improve the leadership performance of volunteer church members; show how to face challenges and opportunities; publish in each issue sermon outlines containing subsidies for voluntary preachers; provide "nourishment" for the spiritual growth of local leaders; motivate,

inspire, and encourage leaders to be faithful disciples; emphasize salvation in Christ so that it becomes the theme of every doctrine, sermon outline, and service.

Lists

Titles

Elder's Digest (2001-)

Editors

Paulo Roberto de Moura Pinheiro (2001-2013); Nerivan Ferreira da Silva (2013-)

SOURCES

"Mission Statement." *Elder's Digest*, January-March 1994:

Pinheiro, Paulo Roberto de Moura. "Avaliação da Revista do Ancião com o fim de Melhorar sua Eficácia na Preparação de Anciãos Para o Ministério" ["Assessment of the Elder's Digest to Improve Its Effectiveness in Preparing Elders for Ministry"]. Doctoral dissertation, Andrews University, 2012.

White, E. G. *Colporteur Ministry*. Tatuí, SP: Brazil Publishing House, 2008.

NOTES

1. E. G. White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Tatuí, SP: Brazil Publishing House, 2008), 8.
2. "Mission Statement," *Elder's Digest*, January-March 1994: 11.
3. Paulo Roberto de Moura Pinheiro. "Avaliação da Revista do Ancião com o fim de Melhorar sua Eficácia na Preparação de Anciãos Para o Ministério" ["Assessment of the Elder's Digest to Improve Its Effectiveness in Preparing Elders for Ministry"] (Doctoral dissertation, Andrews University, 2012).

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